



CITY OF KIRKLAND

Department of Public Works

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www.kirklandwa.gov

MEMORANDUM

To: Kurt Triplett, City Manager

From: David Godfrey, Transportation Manager
Kathy Brown, Public Works Director

Date: May 20, 2015

Subject: DRAFT CITY OF KIRKLAND LETTER WITH COMMENTS ON ST3 DRAFT
PRIORITY PROJECTS LIST

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that City Council reviews, edits and approves a letter to the Sound Transit Board (Attachment A) providing formal input to the Sound Transit 3 Long Range Plan and Priority Project List. Staff further recommends that Kirkland officials and staff should participate and comment at various opportunities throughout Sound Transit's public input outreach process which are identified below.

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION:

The City Council adopted the following element in the 2015-2016 City Work Program:

"Ensure that any Sound Transit ballot measure connects the Totem Lake Urban Center to the region with High Capacity Transit."

Therefore tracking the Sound Transit 3 Long Range Plan and System Plan is a priority for the City. In December 2014 the Sound Transit Board adopted an updated Long Range Plan (LRP), which is a required element of Sound Transit's authorizing legislations. Currently the Sound Transit Board is developing a draft Priority Project List (PPL), which begins to narrow down the corridors and modes that will be considered for an updated System Plan. If authorized by the legislature this year, the System Plan could then be taken to the voters as an ST3 package in November 2016. The legislature is currently debating the size of the package, which could be between \$11 billion and \$15 billion.

The Sound Transit board is seeking public input and jurisdictional comments prior to refining the PPL at their August 27, 2015 Board meeting. Sound Transit will initiate a public outreach process beginning June 4. Formal letters with comments from jurisdictions are due July 15, 2015. Kirkland should finalize its letter early and use it as the basis for comments throughout the public input process. The letter can be supplemented with further comments over time.

Additional Transit Planning Resources

The capacity of the current Kirkland Transportation staff is strained with the development of the Transportation Master Plan and the Six-Year CIP process, both of which are also 2015-2016 City Work Plan items. The Council therefore authorized staff to bring in additional resources to aid in engaging the Sound Transit and King County Metro planning processes to ensure Kirkland's interests are clearly articulated. Kirkland has contracted with the Transpo Group for immediate Sound Transit planning support. Adam Parast from the Transpo Group had been assigned to aid Kirkland and has provided analysis and advice that helped shape the draft letter. Staff are also in the process of hiring a temporary transportation planning position to supplement these efforts.

ST3 Draft Priority Projects List Development 2015 Timeline:

- May 28: Sound Transit Board Meeting – Mayor Amy Walen will address the Board with an overview of Kirkland's draft priorities statement related to ST3 PPL. (Attachment B)
- June 2: Kirkland City Council Meeting – City Council review, edit and approval of City of Kirkland letter commenting on Draft Priority Projects List
- June 4 – July 8: Public Comment/Public Meetings (Online Survey; ST Board Meetings; and five Subarea Public Meetings)
 - **Seattle (Evening)** - June 16 5:30-7:30 p.m. Union Station, 401 S Jackson St.
 - **Everett** - June 18 5:30-7:30 p.m. Everett Station, 3201 Smith Ave.
 - **Redmond** - June 23 5:30-7:30 p.m. Redmond Marriot, 7401 164th Ave. NE
 - **Tacoma** - June 24 5:30-7:30 p.m. Greater Tacoma Convention & Trade Center, 1500 Broadway
 - **Seattle (Daytime)** - June 25 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Union Station 401 S. Jackson St
 - **Federal Way** - June 25 5:30-7:30 p.m. King County Aquatic Center Banquet Room 650 SW Campus Dr.
- June 23: Eastside Subarea Public Meeting in Redmond
- July 15: City Letters with comments of Draft Priority Projects List are due
- August: Sound Transit Board advances Priority Projects List, based on public outreach and jurisdictional input
- October: Financing templates available
- Fall/Winter: Evaluate projects and create templates

Next Steps

With Council feedback and approval, staff will finalize the letter containing Kirkland's comments on the Draft Priority Projects List for submittal to Sound Transit. Staff will then work with the Council to identify which Kirkland officials and staff will appear and comment at the various opportunities throughout Sound Transit's public input outreach process.

Attachment A: Draft Kirkland letter commenting on Draft Priority Projects List

Attachment B: Draft Kirkland Priorities list provided to the Sound Transit Board on May 28, 2015

DRAFT

Dear _____

The City of Kirkland has been tracking the Sound Transit 3 Long Range Plan updates process with interest and thanks Sound Transit staff for engaging the City throughout the process. In December 2014 the Sound Transit Board adopted an updated Long Range Plan (LRP), which is a required element of Sound Transit's authorizing legislations. The LRP is a blueprint for the long-term vision of the region's High Capacity Transit (HCT) network. In and around Kirkland, the LRP identifies transit on the following corridors:

- **SR 520:** Regional express bus and/or HCT from the Seattle side of SR 520 to Redmond
- **I-405:** Regional express bus, bus rapid transit (BRT), and/or light rail (LRT)
- **Eastside Rail Corridor:** HCT from SR 522 to SR 520 serving the Totem Lake Urban Center and South Kirkland Park and Ride
- **SR 522:** Regional express bus and/or HCT from I-5/NE 145th Street to I-405

The LRP update leveraged corridor studies, which included studies of the Eastside Rail Corridor (LRT, BRT, and commuter rail), I-405 BRT, Kirkland-Bellevue-Issaquah (LRT and BRT), and University District-Kirkland-Redmond (LRT and BRT).

Currently the Sound Transit Board is developing a draft Priority Project List (PPL), which begins to narrow down the corridors and modes that will be consider for an updated System Plan. The System Plan could then be taken to the voters as an ST3 package in November 2016. A staff draft of the PPL was presented to the Sound Transit Executive Committee on May 7th and included completion of LRT to downtown Redmond, I-405 BRT and LRT from Totem Lake to Issaquah via the ERC and I-90.

Over the next month the City will engage with Sound Transit as well as other Eastside cities to suggest potential additions or changes to the draft PPL. Once the PPL has been developed, the City of Kirkland would like to actively work with Sound Transit to further refine projects on the PPL to ensure the best possible projects have been studied for a System Plan. The City of Kirkland would like to see a public outreach process that allows the public to see the tradeoffs of various system plans as a system rather and individual corridors.

Kirkland eagerly looks forward to this process and has long supported regional transit investments including Sound Move and ST2. Transit is key to both the City's land use as well as its livability and sustainability goals. The City has a long tradition of investing in the livability of its communities, most notably though acquisition of waterfront park space decades ago. Recently the City also purchased the Cross Kirkland Corridor and has identified it as a corridor where the City would like to see HCT investments.

The City looks forward to increased transit oriented development (TOD), especially in the Totem Lake Urban Center where HCT investments could be a catalyst for development. Currently roughly one-third of Kirkland's employment is in Totem Lake and as the City grows, a greater share of housing and employment growth must occur in Totem Lake. By 2031 nearly half of Kirkland's employment is planned for the Totem Lake Urban Center.

ST3 Priority Project List Comments

The City has synthesized its major comments on the PPL in the list below. This list does its best to present the City's priorities in a brief and simple way. The City looks forward to working directly with the Sound Transit Board and the Sound Transit staff to discuss these priorities. The City will also be developing additional details to be presented at future points in the public process.

- **Identify the Financial Capacity of the Eastside.** The City would like to understand the financial capacity of the East Subarea under both the House and Senate proposals as this will influence the City's priorities moving forward. Kirkland understands there is a limit to the dollars that can be allocated to the eastside and will prioritize projects based on financial realities.
- **Advance ST2 Investments.** Deliver on investments and planning from Sound Move and ST2. Completing investments in I-405 BRT is a key priority of the City with improved access for Kirkland residents at NE 85th Street and the southern portion of the Totem Lake Urban Center. The extension of East Link to downtown Redmond should also be a strong priority, as should an HCT connection from Issaquah to Bellevue.
- **Connect Downtown Kirkland and Google with HCT and regional bus service on I-405 and the ERC.** Downtown Kirkland is one of the densest and most established historic downtowns on the Eastside. Current development projects are underway that will bring thousands of new jobs and hundreds of new housing units to Downtown Kirkland within the next five years. ST3 must connect Downtown Kirkland to BRT and regional transit service on I-405 and SR 520. The City would like to work with Sound Transit to identify ways in which access to BRT and regional transit service can be accomplished such as a new freeway station at NE 85th and better transit connections to the South Kirkland Park and Ride. Any HCT service on I-405 or the Eastside Rail Corridor (ERC) must either pass through or have a high-quality connection to Downtown Kirkland and the Google Campus. Fixed guideway connections or people movers to the corridors are potential solutions. The City would like to work with Sound Transit to identify creative options.
- **Consider BRT as well as LRT along the Eastside Rail Corridor between Totem Lake, Bellevue and Issaquah.** The City would like to see both BRT and LRT included in the PPL, with one of these two HCT projects included in a final ST3 package. The potential revenue constraints to funding LRT along the ERC makes it prudent to keep BRT or other technologies as HCT options. The city requests that Sound Transit work with the City to better develop these concepts before Sound Transit develops the "project templates" for public review.
- **Support TOD in the Totem Lake Urban Center.** The City sees Transit Oriented Developments (TOD) as essential for its continued growth and economic development. A TOD at the Totem Lake Urban Center near I-405 is at the heart of this goal. This includes both TOD on publically owned land, such as the Kingsgate P&R, but also TOD on privately owned land. Improved access to HCT, beyond that provided by the Totem Lake Freeway Station, could help catalyze development in the Totem Lake area. Recommendations of the Growing Transit Communities partnership (of which Kirkland is a member) should guide these investments.

- **Provide additional detail for some projects on the priority project list.** The City would like the “bookends” of AC-5 (I-405 BRT) to be better defined in the priority project list. A large range of investments, operating patterns and their associated cost have previously been identified. The current priority project list description is vague in this regard and this has impacts on potential funding for other Eastside priorities. Project ES-6 (ST Express service) is another project in which additional detail in the priority project list is important for the City. Even with a build out of the HCT system a variety of Eastside corridors will still have Express Bus service. It is difficult to plan and comment without more details.
- **Invest in an integrated transit network.** Much of the City’s transit service is provided by King County Metro. As the region’s HCT network grows, change to some of Kirkland’s core routes, particularly the 255, could be made. The City requests that Sound Transit, Metro and other partners work together to better detail these potential changes and identify which investments can be made as part of ST3 to develop a seamless and integrated transit network in the future. This work should be completed in an integrated manner with Metro’s Long Range planning process and should consider things such as the Metro and Sound Transit bus network, speed and reliability investments, and transfer improvements.

Sincerely,

Amy Walen

Mayor, City of Kirkland

5/22/2015

DRAFT ST3 Priorities (These are not yet finalized by the City Council)

The City has synthesized most of the City's priorities below. This list may be updated and amended by the City Council over time. The City hopes to work with Sound Transit staff to discuss these priorities.

- **Identify the Financial Capacity of the Eastside.** The City would like to understand the financial capacity of the East Subarea under both the House and Senate proposals as this will influence the City's priorities moving forward. Kirkland understands there is a limit to the dollars that can be allocated to the eastside and will prioritize projects based on financial realities.
- **Advance ST2 Investments.** Deliver on investments already begun by Sound Move and ST2. Completing investments in I-405 BRT is a key priority of the City with improved access for Kirkland residents at NE 85th Street and the southern portion of the Totem Lake Urban Center. The extension of East Link to downtown Redmond should also be a priority.
- **Connect Downtown Kirkland and Google with HCT on I-405 and the ERC.** Downtown Kirkland is one of the densest and most established historic downtowns on the Eastside. ST3 must connect Downtown Kirkland to BRT and regional transit service on I-405 and SR 520. The City would like to work with Sound Transit to identify ways in which access to BRT and regional transit service can be accomplished such as a new freeway station at NE 85th. Any HCT service on I-405 or the ERC must either pass through or have a high-quality connection to Downtown Kirkland and the Google Campus. Fixed guideway connections or people movers to the corridors are potential solutions. The City would like to work with Sound Transit to identify options.
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- **Support TOD in the Totem Lake Urban Center.** The City sees TOD as essential for its continued growth and economic development with the Totem Lake Urban Center at the heart of this goal. This includes both TOD on publically owned land, such as the Kingsgate P&R, but also TOD on privately owned land. Improved access to HCT, beyond that provided by the Totem Lake Freeway Station, could help catalyze development in the Totem Lake area. Recommendations of the Growing Transit Communities partnership should guide these investments.
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